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# Advocate of Peace.

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## Compulsory Military Service.

Great dissatisfaction exists in Australia and New Zealand over the conscription enforced in those countries. Forcing boys to be soldiers can never be popular again. The facts furnished by the Australian Freedom League, with headquarters at Melbourne, show how inhuman and illogical the conscription system is. Compulsory parades and drills, arrests, birching, and warrants of execution do not promote patriotism. All such constitute an offense against the sacredness of childhood and sets up a military state within a civil state. It tends to develop a military caste and to degrade a nation's ideals and conscience. The system places its stamp on the mere child and makes him a part of the military machine at twelve years of age. At fourteen he is under military control. These "Defense Acts," so called, established the compulsory military train-

ing in 1909, and it began to be administered in the year 1911. In Australia all males are compelled to drill from 12 to 25 years of age and in New Zealand from 14 to 21 years. The opposition is very great, resulting in fines and attachment of wages, in imprisonment at hard labor, in military detention in barracks, sometimes for ninety days; in depriving offenders of civil rights, possibly for ten years. These are but a few of the accompanying evils. The Minister of Education of New Zealand requires the masters of schools and colleges to withhold "Free Places and Grants" from any student unless he can present a certificate showing that he has complied with the provisions of the Defense Acts.

There have been approximately three thousand prosecutions in New Zealand, the total population of which is but a little over a million. In Australia there have been approximately thirteen thousand prosecutions. As a result numbers of prominent citizens of Australia and New Zealand have formed National Freedom Leagues and Peace Councils to resist the encroachments on their civil and religious liberties. Financial help is being urgently solicited both in England and the United States to pay the expenses of central offices, secretaries, literature, deputations, meetings, legal advice, etc. The work of these most important leagues should be aided immediately in every possible way. If the system of conscription finally prevails in Australia or New Zealand it will be still more vigorously advocated in the mother-land by the National Service League, which is eagerly hoping for the success of the training in Australia. At a recent meeting in Wellington, at which the Prime Minister was present, the acting commandant of the New Zealand forces, Colonel Heard, said: "We want universal military training. Our idea is to start a citizen army, so that, like Australia, we may set a good example to the old country. If we can make our citizen army a success, the old country will see that universal training is not such a very dreadful thing, and will take heart and at once bring such training into force. This scheme is being carried out in the face of opposition, but is going on well." From important official utterances on several occasions it seems clear that the Defense Laws form part of a definite policy of Imperial Defense and are not a simple colonial matter. Colonel Bird, secretary of the National Service League, has spoken with no uncertain meaning when he declared that "ere long we shall be driven in this country to adopt some form of compulsory training in consequence of the success which has attended the training under compulsion in the very democratic community of New Zealand."

The system of conscription, if established in England, would thus be brought nearer to our own land and its malign influence spread far and wide. Enforced military training has already a large number of advocates, who are seeking every opportunity to promote the militarizing of the youth of this free democratic country. The evil effects of conscription are but too clearly seen in the countries of Europe. It is an illogical and intolerable system, and every right-minded person should protest with vigor and persistence against it in every form.

### The Fundamental Question in Mexico.

The conflict between international law, pecuniary interests, and common ethics makes it extremely difficult to speak dogmatically of the present situation in Mexico. Since the execution of Maximilian, in 1867, the history of Mexico has until most recently revolved around Porfirio Diaz, who ousted his predecessor and became President in 1877. Under the ruthless despotism of this tyrant Mexico was reduced to a condition of industrial peace, but her people to a blighting slavery. The reaction against this despotism found expression in the Maderist movement in the north of Mexico—a movement which finally unseated Diaz and sent him from the country. Madero, scholar and idealist, set himself the task of restoring order in the place of anarchy. He was shot to death, however, before the world had time to judge him fairly. By what is called a “coup d'état” in some quarters General Huerta became the head of the professional army at the capital, and of the government itself.

The United States has watched the conduct of affairs in that unhappy country with increasing concern. The Maderists under General Carranza in the north seem to be increasing in power, and the issue between tyranny and democracy is becoming more clearly drawn. The Wilson administration has refused to recognize General Huerta. It ordered a presidential election there, with instructions to General Huerta that he must not be a candidate for the place. Other demands have been made by our Government that constitute technically acts of intervention. In a sense they have been in violation of the Hague Convention of 1899 and of the principle of international law that each state is an independent sovereignty. It is directly counter to the principle that intervention can be admitted only upon one ground and that of self-preservation.

Fundamentally, however, the question in Mexico is not one of protection for our citizens there. It is not a question of the rights of property and property interests, established ruthlessly by the iniquitous system of “concessions.” It is not a question whether the present dictator of Mexico is or is not a murderer. It is not a question of party politics. It is not even a question of international law. It is rather the ages-old question of what can best be done to overcome peonage, to raise the Mexican people out of serfdom, to promote self-government in a country stifled by worse than a feudal tyranny.

There can be no good government but self-government in Mexico or anywhere else. General Huerta is undoubtedly in the way of the onward growth of such government in Mexico. The ultimate question, therefore, is, How far has the United States a duty in the premises? Our frank answer to this question is, We do not know. The Government itself does not seem to know. Of this we are convinced, however, that the motives of the Administration are of the highest. Only time can reveal the wisdom of its course.

### A Sunday for Peace.

For twenty-one years a Sunday has been set apart by the leaders of the peace movement for the special consideration, by Christian churches, of the cause of international friendship and amity. Peace Sunday was instituted by the Second International Peace Congress in 1890, on the suggestion of the Peace Society, London. From that time the Sunday before Christmas has been each year observed by English peacemakers as a day for prayer and the exposition of the principles of peace and good will. Large amounts of literature have been distributed among religious teachers, and many discourses have been pronounced on the subject of peace year after year in the churches of Great Britain, and on some special occasions there have been many thousands of sermons preached on that day. Within the last four or five years more attention has been given to this Sunday among the European churches than heretofore.

In America Peace Sunday has been observed regularly for twenty years on the third Sabbath of December. The peace societies of the United States have each year made an effort to induce the ministers of the country to give serious attention to the great cause of the abolition of war. On special occasions many thousands of preachers have delivered eloquent discourses on the topic, and in certain parts of the country the day has been regularly observed by the clergy.

But the success of the effort has as a rule not been very encouraging. Indeed, in not a few pulpits the subject of peace has been studiously avoided, or not infrequently scoffed at, and war glorified upon occasion as if it were the utmost concern of the Prince of Peace. A change, however, is steadily though slowly taking place, and one may venture to believe that some day the Christian church will have become genuinely Christianized and every Sunday the world over a Peace Sunday.

This year the day falls on December 21, the Sunday before Christmas. It is an unusually appropriate time for the celebration. The message of “peace on earth among men of good will” needs redoubled emphasis. The minds of men, in large numbers at any rate, are unusually turned toward war at the present moment.